



سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية

لدى الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

RECENT
HUMAN RIGHTS REFORMS
IN THE
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA





My primary goal is Saudi Arabia to be an exemplary and leading nation in all aspects, and I will work with you in achieving this endeavor.”

———— King Salman ————

RIGHT TO JUSTICE

- 2020 - Online platform launches for reporting violations of detainee rights.
 - Effective elimination of flogging as a form of criminal punishment.
 - Abolition of the death penalty for minors.
- 2019 - Appeal Courts procedures regulated.
 - Audiovisual recording starts for all criminal hearings.
 - Notarial services digitized; powers of attorney, title deeds can now be managed remotely.
- 2018 - New measures to combat sexual harassment.
 - Specialized courts established in commercial, labor, other sectors.
 - General courts get expanded jurisdiction to include all elements of criminal justice.
 - Supreme Judicial Council ordered to impose punishments only after all appeals exhausted.
- 2017 - Royal order grants full independence to the Public Prosecutor.
- 2016 - U.N. rights staff lead over 50 workshops, training activities for Saudi agencies and authorities.
 - Human rights courses enhanced for judges at Ministry of Justice.
- 2015 - Statute of Saudi Bar Association outlines role of legal profession in defending human rights.



ANTI-TERRORISM

- 2019 - Full membership in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
- 2017 - Terrorism and relevant crimes, procedures, and sentences codified.
 - Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal) established.
 - Intellectual Warfare Center launched to promote moderate and tolerant Islam.



“

We are determined to build a thriving country in which all citizens can fulfill their dreams, hopes and ambitions. Therefore, we will not rest until our nation is a leader in providing opportunities for all through education and training, and high quality services such as employment initiatives, health, housing, and entertainment.”

— Prince Mohammed bin Salman —

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

- 2018 - Mixed-gender education in primary schools begins.
- 2017 - Lifelong Learning Initiative promotes adult literacy.
 - Physical Activity Initiative inaugurated to promote health of female students.
 - Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Education partner to inform students about human rights.



RIGHT TO HEALTH

- 2019** - Major increase in primary health care centers throughout Saudi Arabia.
 - National Center for Mental Health Promotion established to raise awareness and expand access to treatment and rehabilitation.
- 2018** - New regulation to prevent HIV spread, and protect rights and duties of HIV-positive persons.
- 2017** - Saudi Patient Safety Center established to eliminate preventable harm and malpractice in healthcare system.



RIGHT TO WORK AND WORKER'S RIGHTS

- 2020** - Reform of the sponsorship system to increase job mobility, freedom of movement and other significant freedoms for foreign workers.
- 2019** - Night-shift workers' rights, benefits regulated.
- 2018** - Labor Law to Reinforce Equality and Prevent Discrimination expanded.
 - Wages Protection System safeguards workers from fraud and payment delay.
- 2016** - Multilingual call center set up for complaints, suggestions, queries from foreign workers.
 - Labor Advisor app facilitates access for foreign workers to work-related information.





We're not doing gender equality because the West wants it, or because it will target Human Rights Watch and get them off our backs, or because Amnesty International is going to say, 'Great, good job.' We're doing it because it is right."

— HRH Ambassador Reema bint Bandar Al Saud —
Saudi Ambassador to the United States

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN CULTURAL LIFE

- 2018 - Ministry of Media approves first licenses to cinemas.
- 2015 - General Entertainment Authority created to increase cultural, artistic and entertainment events.

RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

- 2018 - National Environment Strategy, National Water Strategy, and Food Safety Strategy unveiled to spur sustainable development.
- 2017 - The "Citizen Account" established to cushion impact of economic reforms on families.
- Poverty line and poverty assessment methodologies established .
- 2016 - Saudi Vision 2030 launched to improve quality of life for all citizens and residents .



The Kingdom's Vision 2030 is at the forefront of these reforms intended to focus on humans, the central element of development, the vision included objectives related to human rights."

— Awwad Al-Awwad —
president of the Saudi Human Rights Commission



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- 2018 - Juvenile Law for rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and abolition of death sentences to minors.
 - Pension rights guaranteed for children of deceased teachers.
- 2016 - Family Affairs Council established to safeguard rights of women, children, elderly.
- 2015 - Child Protection Law allows legal intervention for those under 18 who get married.



RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- 2019 - Sign language service starts on all Ministry of Justice premises .
- 2018 - Accession to the Marrakesh Visually Impaired Persons Treaty.
 - Commission for Care of People with Disabilities established to improve services, education, treatment, rehabilitation, employment.
- 2017 - ‘Yaseer’ program launched for people with mental disabilities.
- 2015 - National strategy for education of persons with disabilities.
 - Inclusive Education Principle increases integration of students with disabilities.



HUMANITARIAN AID AND RELIEF

- 2018 - Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen starts providing security, transportation, education, healthcare assistance.
- 2015 - King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Center initiates first projects in crisis-affected communities around the world.



NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has witnessed reforms across a multitude of spheres progressing in ways that seemed unimaginable before. More than 60 reforms have been made to improve the situation of human rights in the Kingdom, many of which were related to women's rights.





2019

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Reform	Area of Reform	Type of Reform
1. Amendment to the Travel Document Law which grants women equal rights in obtaining travel documents and the ability to travel abroad without any required consent.	Freedom of movement	Legislative
2. Amendment to the Law of Civil Affairs which grants women the right to obtain family records from the Personal Status Department.	Equality before the law	Legislative
3. Amendments to the Labor Law which ensure equality between women and men at work through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -prohibition of gender-based discrimination - prohibition of the actual or threatened dismissal of an employee during pregnancy, during maternity leave, or during a period of illness resulting from either. 	Right to work	Legislative
4. Amendment to the Social Insurance Law which provides that the retirement age for both men and women shall be 60 years old.	Right to work	Legislative
5. Issuance of public decency regulations which have removed restrictions on public dress codes.	Equality before the law	Procedural

2019

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Reform	Area of Reform	Type of Reform
6. Increasing the appointment of females to decision-making positions in the government (Deputy Ministers, Assistant Minister, Ambassador) as well as provision of previously unavailable positions in fields such as public prosecution and litigation.	Women's empowerment	Procedural





2018

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Reform	Area of Reform	Type of Reform
7. Issuance of the Anti-Harassment Law.	Elimination of violence against women	Legislative
8. Amendment to the Traffic law which enables women to acquire driving licenses.	Freedom of movement	Legislative
9. Issuance of a resolution which eliminates the need to file a lawsuit in order to be granted child custody (in cases where there are no disputes).	Personal status	Judicial
10. Issuance of a decision by the General Sports Authority which enables women to attend public sports events.	Women's empowerment	Procedural
11. Issuance of a high order which stipulates the provision of free legal support for women and children in cases of abuse and domestic violence.	Elimination of violence against women	Judicial
12. Amendment to the Standard Form of Organizing Work Regulations which state that there must not be any wage discrimination between men and women.	Right to work	Procedural

2017

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Reform	Area of Reform	Type of Reform
13. Establishment of a government alimony fund linked to the Ministry of Justice which ensures the provision of alimony to beneficiaries on time.	Personal status	Legislative Judicial
14. The launch of a number of initiatives by the Ministry of Human Resources & Social Development which aim to economically empower women. These programs include: - "Qurrah" which aims at providing appropriate childcare facilities - "Wusool" which facilitates transportation for working women - The "Freelance," "Remote Work," and "Part-Time" programs are other examples that enable maximum female participation in the labor market.	Women's empowerment	Procedural
15. Issuance of a decree which eliminates discrimination against women in the provision or termination of all services (such as health care, employment, banking, civil services, etc.) through abolishing the need for any required consent.	Women's empowerment	Legislative
16. Issuance of a decree which requires all relevant entities to put forth suggested best practices to eliminate domestic violence.	Elimination of violence against women	Legislative



2016

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Reform	Area of Reform	Type of Reform
17. Enabling of civil society institutions to establish offices in family courts to provide free legal support.	Personal status	Judicial
18. Establishment of the Family Affairs Council which focuses on safeguarding, enhancing, and protecting the rights of Women, Children, and the Elderly.	Women's empowerment	Institutional

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We are seeking to diversify our economy away from oil, we are seeking to open up new areas for investment, we are seeking to empower our youth, we are seeking to empower women, we are seeking to transform our country into a dynamic, innovative, transparent, accountable, efficient society.”

— Adel al-Jubeir —

2016

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Reform	Area of Reform	Type of Reform
19. Establishment of a complaint center dedicated to domestic violence.	Elimination of violence against women	Institutional
20. Increased female participation in sports (More than 1/3 of Saudi participants in Olympics 2016 were female).	Women's empowerment	Procedural





2015

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Reform

Area of Reform

Type of Reform

21. Issuance of new regulations which enable provision of accommodation to women (hotels, apartments for rent) without any required consent.

Freedom of movement and choose residence

Procedural



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Vision 2030 is not just a program for economic reform, it is a true effort at national transformation. We aim to create a more vibrant society, thriving economy, and an ambitious nation.”

— Faisal bin Farhan —



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